

**Concord Steering Committee to End Homelessness
Meeting Minutes
March 29, 2017
(a rescheduled meeting)**

Present: *j St. Hilaire, Pam Puleo, Ruth Perencevich, Lew Feldstein, Robert Hirschfeld, Kara Wyman, Rosemary Heard, Tim Sink, Steve Duprey, Byron Champlin, Karen Emis-Williams, Ron White*

Also present: *Ellen Groh (CCEH Director), Maggie Fogarty (CCEH Board)*

Previous minutes approved unanimously.

Director's report – Ellen Groh

Housing First is going well. Seven people have been housed with federal rental assistance vouchers. Clients are waiting to utilize the remaining three vouchers, but housing supply is short. It is difficult to convince clients to consider Manchester options. Two candidates were denied housing because of their backgrounds.

There was a fire at the "Farm" apartments, where five of our people are being housed.

Some issue with unauthorized guests of the voucher holder, causing major disruptions with the neighbors.

Discussion;

Long term solution would be for CCEH to become its own developer. Bringing in services as needed.

Might CATCH be that partner developer? Challenge is being able to have only one application/project in front of NH HFA at one time.

It would be a strong partnership.

Concentrated development does invite NIMBY issues. Other parts of the city and the county should share the burden.

Winter shelter: j says going smoothly, numbers are growing, up to 50 people/night. Higher number of children than was expected. Next year, no families. We will call 211 when families arrive.

Why the increase in numbers? It's a shelter of last resort at the beginning of the winter. Shelter of convenience by the end of the season. Behaviors don't get interrupted.

Discussion: How will we handle this next year?

EG: We discussed some of these questions with past shelter managers yesterday. We continue to work on it. We will seek advice from other, more experienced providers.

The cold weather shelter serves as a "waiting room for Housing First."

The need of non-chronically homeless skews the logic of the program.

EG: We haven't been able to do the analysis yet on length of stay of guests. Current shelter managers haven't shared the data from this season yet.

We need the numbers per night. So we can see the short term, length of stay, etc.

In future years, there will be more case management, closer relationship with the CHRC, prioritization of the most vulnerable.

We need to assess whether Housing First works. Are there national models that work?

EG: Yes, there are HF programs which have been able to close overflow shelters.

EG: We have applied to the City for \$30,000 operations funding for the shelter. And there are reasons to not build a 60 bed shelter. It would fill up with people from other towns.

Commissioner Wren says discharge happens in Concord because services are so good. The services are here.

I feel more comfortable with the 34-40 bed option.

Is it unreasonable to meet with other communities to promote collaborations?

EG: Not unreasonable; it just takes a lot of time.

A county approach was discussed early on. through county tax. Or possibly a lawsuit.

It will still be helpful to have some "pathway" data. Do folks come from prison, state hospital, county jail, etc. Last permanent address.

Is there a better way to help people understand the mission to end homelessness? For example, how do we help the city clerk to understand Functional zero?

J: We are ending homelessness one person at a time; there will continue to be people becoming homeless in this economy.

EG: Photo voice project, focusing on homelessness, addiction and poverty with photographs and video. Contact is Lisa Hochberg at CenterPoint.

What's going to happen as the economy changes? Automation, low wage jobs, etc. Loss of jobs for people without higher education. What happens to people in this economy? It could be significantly exacerbated in the next 15 years.

Choice is between socialism and social Darwinism.

We must talk about homelessness not as an isolated phenomena, but in the context of broader economic health and unhealthy, wages, access to health care and supportive services, etc.

Nashua has achieved functional zero with veteran homelessness.

EG: Who can join RW in conversation with the county about a partnership to end homelessness? He suggests a presentation to association of counties, followed by outreach to a specific county, inclusive of the delegation and the commissioners.

Commissioners get it. We need a local lawsuit.

But those towns need to feel responsible. They are saying "we are out of funds." How do we hold them accountable?

Charge towns for the sheltered homeless in Concord who are from their town.

Can the City of Concord bring a suit?

There is a consequence to our services.

A city representative should be a part of a presentation to Association of Counties, and then do specific outreach to Merrimack County. Maggie will reach out to Cathy Kuhn about approaching the association to do education and engagement for a county level solution.

Merrimack County will be finalizing a job description and hiring a director of human services. This person could be getting towns on board.

We should also present to the Municipal Association.

Medicaid Transformation Waiver Justice Re-Entry project -- Kara Wyman

Targets justice involved individuals with a substance abuse disorder.

Increases the job pool. Decreases ED visits. We don't want people leaving institutions without links to services. Region II re-entry: We want to change the face of what jails do. We've pulled them into the Waiver and said you have to change the way you do business. Targeting high risk offenders. We are providing in jail evidence-based treatment programs. Focusing on criminogenic risk and need. Focus on addiction, need for mental health counseling and treatment before they walk out the door. They'll have a literal calendar with appointments in it. Prescriptions will be in place for the 30 days till insurance kicks in. Collaboration with local providers to make sure services continue. Case managers (5), patient care coordinators. Creating transitional plans. A real place to live (not a couch). We will not send people to CCEH. We are working with the prison and the Sununu center.

This is a reverse grant.

Electronic monitoring, testing for substances.

Goal is successful offender adjustment and reentry.

12 months of sobriety.

83 participants so far. Two people have graduated from the entire program.

Ability to actively monitor as long as they are under supervision.

3,500 people in and out at Boscawen county jail. As opposed to a few hundred coming out of the state prison each year.

These are our neighbors; they come from the community and they will return to the community.

Accompaniment to find housing and jobs. My Turn program.

New money, better discharge planning, and durable aftercare.

This is with the 1115 Medicaid Transformation Waiver. Needs to show that its cost neutral. Has saved \$ at emergency rooms, etc. Doesn't count to show decreased recidivism.

97% of folks are returning to our communities.

U.S. is 5% of the world population, and 25% of the world's incarcerated population.

Advocacy Update – Maggie Fogarty

Maggie shared an update on the advocacy to fund the state's affordable housing trust fund. Original bill, SB 94, requested \$25 million. This was amended to \$5 million, passed in the full Senate and tabled. House Public Works has included \$500,000 in HB 25, the capital budget. We shall see how the budget process proceeds.

Currently there is no indication that state funding for homeless programs is being reduced.

At the federal level, the President's budget makes dramatic cuts to key housing and human service programs. We will see what House budget writers propose.

Core elements of housing funding (low income housing tax credits) are going to be affected by tax reform efforts in Congress, so this debate should be watched closely.

Other Updates

Maggie has spoken to Amy Lockwood about a simple but effective process for "refreshing" the City's Plan to End Homelessness. First steps are a summary of successes, accomplishments and challenges in the first three years. And an environmental scan including business/economic as well as human service factors. Then, a facilitated session with the Steering Committee and key stakeholder representatives.

Next Meeting:

May 16, 2017

2 pm – 4 pm

Greater Concord Chamber of Commerce